



STATEMENT DELIVERED BY

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HEAD OF ERITREAN DELEGATION

AT THE

XVII MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT

ALGIERS, ALGERIA  
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Mr. Chairman,  
Excellences,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank the people and government of Algeria for the warm hospitality and commend them for successfully organizing this Conference. I would also like to congratulate the Islamic Republic of Iran, the current Chair, for its tireless efforts and leadership in achieving a consensus Final Document.

Algeria has a special place in the Hearts and Minds of the people and government of Eritrea. Consistent with the values and principles of Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the people and successive governments of Algeria are one of those countries who supported the 30-years armed struggle of the Eritrean people for independence and self-determination. Let me once again thank the people and government of Algeria for their support to the Eritrean people who celebrated their 23<sup>rd</sup> independence day last week on May 24<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Chairman,

As much as Algeria has a special place in the Hearts and Minds of the people and government of Eritrea, it would be remiss on me not to mention the significance of this beautiful city of Algiers for the people of Eritrea and Ethiopia. Fourteen years ago in the year 2000, under the able leadership of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria, the leaders of Eritrea and Ethiopia agreed to solve their border dispute through a Final and Binding Arbitration Mechanism. The Algiers Agreement was guaranteed by the United Nations and the African Union as well as witnessed by the US and EU. The Agreement gave full and sole authority to an independent Arbitration Commission to Delimit and Demarcate the boundaries of the two countries. The Eritrea Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC) was composed of five prominent arbitration judges, of which two were chosen by Eritrea two by Ethiopia and the President by the former UN Secretary-General Mr. Kofi Anan.

The EEBC, after deliberating on the issue for a year and half has unanimously awarded the disputed territory, including the town of Badme to Eritrea. It pronounced its Final and Binding Delimitation Decision in 2002 and its Demarcation Decision in 2007. The map determining the exact boundary lines with clear coordinates is given by the EEBC to both countries. It is also deposited in the United Nations. Therefore, today there is no border dispute between Eritrea and Ethiopia. What we have is Ethiopia's occupation of sovereign Eritrean territory, including the town of Badme. Once again, the disputed territory is unanimously awarded by the EEBC to Eritrea. Hence, there is no need of dialogue between Eritrea and Ethiopia on this matter. It must be underlined that the Algiers Agreement is product of Dialogue and Mediation process that culminated with a judicial settlement. Final and Binding means; Final and Binding.

No country, neither big nor small, under any justification or pretext should be allowed to occupy the sovereign territory of another country. It must not be tolerated. It must be

condemned and rejected. Occupation can be solved only by evacuation or withdrawal of the occupying party from the territory it occupies. There is no other option. For the sake of the people of Eritrea and Ethiopia and stability of the region, the Government of Ethiopia must be urged to respect its treaty obligations and to unconditionally and immediately withdraw from sovereign Eritrean territories, including the town Badme. There is no rational or justification for Ethiopian government to continue its occupation of sovereign Eritrean territories under the pretext of Dialogue after the EEBC has clearly Delimited and Demarcated the boundary between Eritrea and Ethiopia.

Mr. Chairman,

As to the issue of Dialogue between governments of Eritrea and Ethiopia, I want to reiterate Eritrea's unflinching stance and commitment that if the Government of Ethiopia withdraw from our sovereign territories, including the town of Badme in the morning; the Eritrean government is ready, not today but yesterday, to dialogue, with the Ethiopian government in the afternoon at any place at any time and on any issue of common interest.

Mr. Chairman,

The Non-Aligned Movement is still an important force in international relations. Our real strength never relied on major powers political and diplomatic confrontation but on the principles we all cherished and advocated since the inception of our Movement. The principles and values of NAM are as valid today as they were half a century ago. Respect to sovereignty, non-interference, non-aggression and respect for international law and obligations are the overarching principles that never withered even with the passage of time. That is why Eritrea finds the theme of this Conference: "Enhancing Solidarity for Peace and Development" relevant and meaningful.

Mr. Chairman,

A peaceful, justice and prosperous world remains a distant dream to be realized. Seven decades after we vowed to save succeeding generations from wars, deprivations and injustices, many of our countries continue to suffer from marginalization and poverty. This is primarily because the institutions established to galvanize collective action against war, poverty, and injustice are undermined by a few powerful countries and are often manipulated to serve and advance their agenda of domination and exploitation.

It is a well-known fact for all of us that some permanent members of the UN Security Council continue to abuse the mandate of the Council by promoting their agenda and interests. They use it as an instrument of coercion and intimidation. They threaten and punish countries that reject their hegemonic agenda. They label countries with independent political stance as "Spoilers" and "Destabilizers". They use all types of mechanism and methods of domination and intimidation. Sanction is one of them.

Sanctions whether we call them smart, selective, targeted or comprehensive; and whether they are imposed unilaterally or multilaterally affect the people not the governments. They perpetuate poverty and marginalization. The negative impacts of unjustified multilateral and unilateral sanctions imposed against a number of NAM countries are there for anyone to judge. Imposing any type of sanctions on any developing countries contradicts the objectives of global development agenda and goals, be it MDGs, Post-2015 Development Agenda or SDGs, whose main purpose is the eradication of poverty. It also goes against the letter and spirit of NAM's principles and purposes of solidarity as well as the UN Charter which clearly reaffirms respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all countries. It also contradicts NAM's principle of solidarity. Imposing any types of sanctions against any developing country must be rejected and challenged by all of us. Let us maintain the spirit and letter of solidarity and unity of NAM. Let us practice what we preach.

Mr. Chairman,

Another area where political and diplomatic manipulation is advanced and perpetuated by the dominant powers is in the area of Human Rights. Promotion and protection of human rights has been a core tenant of our Movement. Human rights issue can only be addressed through comprehensive and dialogue-based approach, with objectivity, impartiality, non-selectivity and transparency as the main guiding principles. However, we are increasingly witnessing the politicization and manipulation of human rights mechanisms for political pressure and regime change agenda. Countries who rejected the creation of the UN Human Rights Council are using the Council for their geopolitical interest and agenda. It is unfortunately to see that some members of the NAM have become a willing accomplice of this destructive scheme. In the Final Document that we have just adopted; we rejected country specific resolutions on human rights. In this spirit, we must be united and be vocal in all multilateral forums stressing the importance of dialogue and cooperation over confrontation. Naming and shaming approach must be rejected by all of us. Once again, let us maintain the spirit and letter of solidarity and unity.

Mr. Chairman,

We must rise beyond our narrow national interests and short term political and diplomatic expediencies. The collective ideals of NAM must be respected. Strengthening our solidarity will make us partners, rather than subordinates in international forums, including the United Nations.

Allow me to conclude by reaffirming Eritrea's commitment to the principles and ideals of the Non-Aligned Movement.

I Thank You, Mr. Chairman